Stiletto Heells Team
Sakamichi no Apollo by Kodama Yuki
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Kodama Yuki Profile

Born in 9/26, blood type A. Her hometown is in Nagasaki Prefecture. Debuted in the year 2000 with the short story "Pomegranate" in "CUTIE comic" (Takarajima Company). After submitting numerous other works to Flowers in 2005, she debuted with them with "Hikari no Umi" or "Sea of Light" in 2007. Currently, her popular series "Sakamichi no Apollon" is still ongoing in Flowers.

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坂道のアポロン

小玉ユキ *Kodama Yuki*

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作品紹介

★1966年初夏、横須賀から地方の高校へ転入した薫。幼い頃から転校の繰り返しで、薫にとって学校は苦しいだけの場所になっていた。ところが転入初日、とんでもない男と出会い、薫の高校生活が意外な方向へ変わり始め…!?

収録作品　「坂道のアポロン」①／「穏男」

● KODAMA YUKI'S WORKS

SAKAMICHI NO APOLLON 1 ~ 2
HAGOROMO MISHIN
HIKARI NO UMI

● KODAMA YUKI SHORT STORIES

① MANGO NO NAMIDA
② BEAUTIFUL SUNSET

Cover design／名久井直子

flowers フラワーコミックス アルファ

坂道の
アポロン①

SAKAMICHI NO APOLLON
1
KODAMA YUKI

FLOWER COMICS α

flowers
フラワーコミックス
アルファ

フラワーコミックスアルファ

坂道のアポロン
1

小玉ユキ

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小学館

SAKAMICHI NO APOLLON

KODAMA YURI

＊flowersフラワーコミックスα＊

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＊flowersフラワーコミックスα＊

SCENE 1 (シーン)

THIS IS ANNOYING.

HUFF

HUFF

WHY DO PEOPLE BUILD SCHOOLS ON TOP OF HILLS?

HUFF

EVEN UNDER NORMAL CIRCUM-STANCES,

WE'RE HEADING TOWARD A PLACE WE DON'T WANT TO GO.

HUFF

FROM NOW ON,

I HAVE TO BE OUT OF BREATH CLIMBING THIS HILL.

HUFF

HUFF

JUST THINKING ABOUT IT MAKES ME WANT TO VOMIT.

SCENE 1

HE HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED ALL THE WAY FROM YOKOSUKA.

UHH, WITH NISHIMI-KUN'S FATHER NOW WORKING ON A SHIP,

TRY TO GET ALONG WITH HIM.

I DON'T FEEL ANY TENSION,

That's far.

Whisper

Whisper

What? Yokosuka?

Whisper

I'M USED TO THIS SCENE.

OR EVEN A SLIGHT HESITATION.

I DON'T EX-PECT ANY-THING.

THAT HE HAD THE TOP GRADES AT HIS SCHOOL.

THERE WAS A RUMOR GOING AROUND THE STAFF ROOM

HE LOOKS LIKE A NERD.

Whisper

Whisper

Whisper

WHAT, SO HE'S A RICH KID?

AND COMMUTES FROM THE MANSION OVER THERE.

I HEARD HE'S THE NEPHEW OF K HOSPI-TAL'S DI-RECTOR,

Whisper

Whisper

THE RADIO CLUB'S FUN, AND THE UPPER-CLASSMENS ARE REALLY NICE.

INTERESTED IN RADIO?

HAVE YOU DECIDED ON YOUR CLUB YET?

NISHIMI-KUN, NISHIMI-KUN.

DING

DANG

CHATTER

DONG

HAHAHA, GOOD FOR YOU, MARUO. YOU'VE FOUND YOURSELF A PARTNER.

OH, AND THEY'RE BOTH RICH BRATS.

BOTH OF THEM WEAR GLASSES, ARE SHORT, AND LOOK NERDY.

GYAHAHA

DON'T YOU FEEL SYMPATHETIC?

LOOK, MARUO'S UNUSUALLY ASSERTIVE.

...

DON'T WORRY.

rustle

IT'S ALL MY FAULT THAT YOU GOT DRAGGED INTO IT...

S... SORRY.

OH, AND THAT GOES FOR RADIO TOO.

Aww..

Ahh Strike

Strike

SORRY, BUT I HAVE NO INTEREST IN SOMEONE WITH LOW SELF-ESTEEM.

UM, W-WILL YOU BE MY FR..

flip

YOU'LL FIND PEOPLE LIKE THAT EVERYWHERE

JUST IGNORE WHATEVER THOSE CHILDISH PEOPLE SAY

HIS NAME'S KAWABUCHI.

IS THE LAST GUY YOU'D WANT TO GO AGAINST.

THE GUY WHO SITS BEHIND ME

...OH, ONE LAST THING, NISHIMI-KUN.

HE'S A NOTORIOUS DELINQUENT THAT EVEN THE TEACHERS CAN'T CONTROL.

ALL HE DOES IS CUT CLASS.

...

Son

TIME FOR CLASS.

DING DONG

DINGDONG

A-ANYWAY, NISHIMI-KUN, IF YOU DON'T MIND COMING TO SEE OUR CLUB ROOM JUST ONCE...

UH-HUH.

Snap

Grip...

Peek

"KAWABUCHI."

BUWA

DID HE SAY, NOTORI-OUS?

...OH, NO, JUST THINKING ABOUT IT

NO, DON'T COME BACK.

NISHIMI-KUN.

MAKES ME SICK TO MY STOMACH.

BOING

I'M THE CLASS PRESIDENT, MUKAE RITSUKO.

NICE TO MEET YOU.

DURING THE NOON RECESS,

THEY TOLD ME TO SHOW YOU AROUND THE SCHOOL.

OH

THE NAUSEA'S GONE.

WHO'S HE?

NEVER SEEN HIM.

HE'S A TRANSFER STUDENT FROM YOKOSUKA.

I HEARD HE'S A PRODIGY.

THEY CONNECT TO THE MAIN, CONCRETE BUILDING.

WHISPER

FIRST YEAR CLASSES END HERE.

AS FOR THE THOSE LOCKERS ACROSS THE HALL,

THAT I'M UNUSED TO HEARING

INTONATIONS OF A DIALECT

AND PIERCING GLANCES.

UP UNTIL NOW,

HM?

MUKAE-SAN.

THIS IS THE NOISIEST WELCOME I'VE EVER HAD.

UH,

WHERE IS THE BALCONY?

ESPECIALLY NOW WHEN...

ABOUT THE BALCONY...

I DON'T THINK IT'S GOOD FOR YOU TO GO NEAR THERE.

Um

THE BALCONY... IS IN THE MAIN BUILDING OVER THERE.

UM...

NISHIMIO-SAN?!

H-HUH?!

DAMN IT.

BUT

IF I CAN JUST GET OVER THERE...

CAME BACK AGAIN.

THAT EARLIER NAUSEA,

I HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRING IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL EVER SINCE ELEMENTARY.

BUT IN AN UNEXPECTED OCCASION,

I DID WELL NO MATTER WHICH SCHOOL I WENT TO UNTIL FIFTH GRADE.

I WAS UNABLE TO MAINTAIN MY HEART'S BALANCE,

SO NOW WHEN I FEEL A LITTLE STRESS, I BECOME NAUSEOUS.

AS LONG AS I CAN GET THERE,

HUFF

HUFF

I WOULD ENDURE PAINFUL MEMORIES EVERYTIME I TRANSFERRED.

BUT ONE DAY,

I FOUND A PLACE IN SCHOOL,

WHERE I COULD BREATHE AND GET A HOLD OF MYSELF.

I'LL BE ABLE TO FREE MYSELF FROM THIS SUFFOCATING HELL.

HUFF

HUFF

WH...

HUFF

HUFF

WHAT'S THIS...?

HUFF

HUFF

A STORAGE RIGHT HERE...?

rustle

HUH...?!

roll

...MM...

...HUH?

...OHH.

GLUTCH

SO YOU'RE HERE...
TO TAKE ME AWAY?

...

rustle

...HM?

HOLDING MY HAND?

WHY'RE YOU

WHO'RE YOU?

FWUP

TUG

WHAT?

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO GRABBED IT!

WH...

HOW'D YOU SNEAK IN?

...YOU...

...?

I NEED TO GET THROUGH!

MOVE! YOU'RE IN THE WAY!

...WHO!

WHO'RE YOU CALLING A KID?!

PIH

MIDDLE SCHOOL KIDS SHOULD STAY IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

Or your teacher will get angry

MOVE.

SORRY, BUT YOU AIN'T GOING THROUGH HERE.

...

AHH.

...

blink...

...NGH.

TOO BAD.

...

THE KEY..

D-

DAMN!

WHAT'S HIS DEAL?

flutter

tap

tap

tap..

Heh.

HOW... ANNOYING.

HE MUST HAVE SOME INCREDIBLE FORCE THERE.

THROWING OFF MY ANGEL LIKE THAT.

HAHAHA.

roll

WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?

I WAS JUST ONE STEP AWAY.

WHAT WAS ALL THAT ABOUT?

I FELT LIKE WAS COVERED IN LIGHT.

FOR A MOMENT,

I BET IT'D FEEL GOOD SMOKING ON THE BALCONY

AHH, IT'S WAY TOO CRAMPED IN HERE.

...WAIT.

I'M NOT NAUSEOUS ANYMORE...

HEHEHE...

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

HEY GUYS,

HM.

dangle

...WHAT?

SO WE CAN'T GET ONTO THE BALCONY?!

O
O
O

SHOOOOOCK

WHY CAN'T THIS SCHOOL STOP BEING SO FORMAL AND OPEN UP THE BALCONY FOR US?

US THIRD YEAR STUDENTS IN THE SMOKING GROUP WOULD TAKE OVER IT IMMEDIATELY.

HAHA.

HOW'D YOU GET A HOLD OF IT?!

Wooooow

Ahem

WHAT...? THE BALCONY KEY...

daaaaangle

...

SO I STOLE THEM FROM HIM!

Hahaha

Along with a group of other seniors

I HEARD RUMORS THAT A FIRST YEAR KID NAMED SENTAROU SNUCK OUT WITH IT.

I THOUGHT HE WAS A CHEEKY BRAT.

SCREECH

LET'S GO RIGHT NOW.

YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD US THAT YOU HAD IT SOONER!

Before we lighted up!

...ANYWAY, LET'S GET IT DONE!

STEALING FROM A FRESHMAN...

We're gonna lose face..

MAN, I CAN'T WAIT. HAVEN'T HAD A GOOD WORKOUT IN A LONG TIME.

YOU'D BETTER GO EASY ON HIM.

CRACK CRACK

I HEARD HE CAN GET PRETTY WILD.

OKAY, SO THAT SENTAROU KID'S WAITING TO AMBUSH ME IN FRONT OF THE BALCONY.

SENTAROU?

Oo

I followed them..

THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT HIM?

DON'T TELL ME

THAT GUY'S PRETTY BIG,

BUT HE'S UP AGAINST THREE PEOPLE.

THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE A FIGHT?

PRESS

SWOOP

IT CAN'T BE...

I'll treat him real good.

Ha ha ha.

JAB

JAB

tap

tap

tap

tap

ISN'T THAT DANGEROUS?

FINALLY DECIDED TO SHOW UP, HUH?

SO THE KEY-STEALING TROUPE

The god's are on my side

I JUST CAN'T REST UNTIL I GET BACK WHAT'S TAKEN FROM ME.

YOU BUM!

HA!

SO YOU'RE SENTAROU, HUH?

I'VE BEEN WAITING SO LONG

CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE ACTUALLY WAITING.

THAT MY BODY'S STARTING TO ROT.

whoosh

RATTLE

CLACK

slide

SO IT REALLY IS HIM?

S-

HE HAS SUCH A BIG ATTITUDE...

HM?

!!

FLUTTER

UWAH!

TOSS

BUHA!

HAA!

OHH?!

shuffle

shuffle

shuffle

Mm.

YOU'RE THE MIDDLE SCHOOL KID FROM BEFORE!

PLAYING GHOST BY YOURSELF? LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE HAVING FUN!

WHAT'D YOU COME BACK FOR?!

...I...

I CAME BECAUSE I WANTED TO GET THE BALCONY KEY!!

...

HEY, YOU.

YOU WANT THE KEYS, RIGHT?

Y-

YES!

OKAY.

JUST WAIT

...WHAT?

WHAT DID HE SAY?

WHAT DID

HE SAY JUST NOW?

THUD

BAM

SHUDDER

WHACK

SPURT

SOUND WITH EACH COLLISION.

BONES AND FLESH

THUD

CRICK

AT SUCH A CLOSE DISTANCE,

Come if you dare

BLOOD IS SPURTING EVERYWHERE.

THAT GUY...

HE'S DOING THIS FOR ME?

DON'T TELL ME

tap tap tap

SO YOU LOOK DOWN ON US, HUH?

PEEK

Jerk

PEEK

YOU STUBBORN BASTARD!

HEY...

GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF.

ARE YOU OKAY?!

H...HEY!

HOW ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO WIN AGAINST...

THREE SENIORS...?

HOW RECK-LESS...

...

SLUMP

SWING

SWING

SWING

WANT THESE?

DIDN'T YOU

HERE.

*Note: about $1,000 USD

I SACRIFICED MY BODY TO GET THESE.

100,000'S A BARGAIN.

Ahh, it hurts

DON'T TELL ME

YOU THOUGHT I'D GIVE THEM TO YOU FOR FREE?

FWUP

...

THIS JERK...

Smirk

TH-

...SO I'M GOING HOME!

tap

OKAY.

I'VE GOT THE KEYS NOW.

D...DAMN IT! THAT WAS HIS PURPOSE ALL ALONG....

I GOT EXCITED OVER NOTHING...

I'm so dumb...

grind...

BY THE WAY,
I HAVEN'T GONE TO CLASS AT ALL TODAY.
HAHAHA.
IN THE YEAR 1966, NEARING EARLY SUMMER.
DING
DANG
DONG
DING
IS THE STRANGE TUNE OF THE BELLS CHIMING.
RIGHT NOW, REVER-BERATING IN MY HEAD,

Brought to you by

Stiletto Heels

SCÉNE2

THE HILL

AND ITS INTIMIDATING AIR HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE COMPELLING.

I BET IT'S BECAUSE OF THE RAIN

AND THAT GUY

WHO I MET YESTERDAY.

Silence...

THUD

...YEAH...

Thump

IT'S OUT OF THE ORDINARY FOR KAWA-BUCHI-KUN TO COME TO CLASS ON TIME.

What's going on?

SHEESH...

SENTAROU.

SPIT

I HAD TWO BACK-TO-BACK BATTLES ON THE ROOFTOP YESTERDAY.

OH, YEAH.

yaaawn

WHAT?! Two battles... in

DON'T TELL ME YOU GOT INTO ANOTHER FIGHT?

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE GAINED MORE BRUISES...

SIGH

IN MY SLEEP THOUGH.

WELL, I FOUGHT THE FIRST ROUND

WITH THE FACE LIKE A CHILD

MY ANGEL CAME FOR ME

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT THAT IT AIN'T GOIN' GOOD AND I MIGHT DIE,

Uh-huh..

AND GOT BASHED PRETTY BADLY.

I WAS POWER-LESS IN MY DREAMS

ANGEL...

GOOD MORNING, NISHIMI-SAN.

OH...

M-MORNING...

REUNITE WITH THIS GUY IN THIS PLACE?

DO I HAVE TO

WHY

...

WHO'S HE?!

RIKKO!

I'M NOT GOING TO GET SUCKED INTO HIS PACE.

AS IF I'D TURN AROUND FOR YOU.

YOU... HEY! SHOW ME YOUR FACE!

HEY!

KITUNK

...HUH?!

FWUP

Sue treats him like a kid.

Scary...

O°

Nice...

Thrab

I'M NOT TELLING ANY BOYS WHO KEEP GETTING INTO FIGHTS.

PLOP

TELL ME.

EEK!

MARUDE DAMEO.*

TUG

HEY!

*Translator Notes: Marude Dameo (lit. Completely Useless Man) is an anime, manga character from the late 60's, in which this particular character slightly resembles

Whisper

HE'S A PRODIGY WHO'S WAY SMARTER THAN ME,

AND HE'S A RICH KID.

H...HIS NAME IS NISHIMI KAORU, AND HE TRANSFERRED HERE YESTERDAY.

I-I can't breathe...

HE'D BETTER NOT BLAB...

HAH!

DON'T TELL ME...

FAREWELL, MARUO.

...HUH?

Jerk

BETRAYAL

TT

UP

BONBON-DONO.*

SO THAT REALLY WAS YOU.

LET'S BE FRIENDS FROM NOW ON,

*Translator's note: Kansai dialect for green/naive young man from a well-to-do family.

THERE'S NOTHING MORE THAT CAN BE DONE.

Pssst

LOOK, SENTAROU SWITCHED HIS TARGET.

I FEEL BAD [illegible] ONLY BEEN HERE FOR TWO DAYS...

Silence...

I'm sorry, Nishimi- kun...

AS IF I'D GET INVOLVED!

I'M JUST GOING TO COMPLETELY IGNORE HIM THEM.

LET'S HAVE YOU READ THIS PARAGRAPH.

NISHIMI-KUN,

OKAY.

that were old, imprisoned, and unguessed..

?

WOW...

..

She made him, to all appearances, a new man;

though most of the newness was really a warming to life of things

..

HE'S TALKING SO FAST!

Woah!

Wow!

JUST LIKE AN ACTOR FROM THOSE AMERICAN MOVIES...

H... HIS PRONUN-CIATION...

YOU MAY BE SEATED.

KTLNK

HMPH...

AHH,

WONDERFUL PRONUNCIATION, NISH.MI-KUN.

...

ANOTHER CITY KID SHOWING OFF.

DAMN IT.

I CAN'T STAND THIS ATMOSPHERE ANY LONGER.

CHATTER

QUIET!

CHATTER

CHATTER

I WANT TO ESCAPE.

OH, NO...

HE'S GOT THE KEYS...

O_o

o_o

yawn

Scratch

Scratch

lick

Wheez

A-As if I'd lose to him..

HEY.

I NEED A FAVOR.

AS FOR THE 100,000 YEN,

I DON'T THINK I CAN GET THAT MUCH...

Extor-tion...?

Um..

What...?

BUT

CAN I JUST BORROW THE KEYS FOR NOW?

?

OH, THE BALCONY KEY?

rustle

JINGLE

BUT YOU...

SNATCH

!

CLINK

THUD

THUD

THUD

THUD

HEY!

WHAT'S THE POINT OF GOIN' THERE NOW, BON-BON?!

IT'S RAINING OUTSIDE! CAN'T YOU SEE?!

SHUT UP!

I CAN JUST USE AN UMBRELLA, RIGHT?!

DA HA HA HA.

WEIR-DO!!

YOU MUST REALLY LOVE THAT BALCONY!!

BU-HA-HA-HA!!

...BFT!

THIS LOOKS FUN!

I'M GOING TOO!

I FORGOT TO GIVE HIM A REPLY.

NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

turn

OH, NO!

L-let me go

struggle

OTHER WAY, OTHER WAY.

CLUTCH

URK.

turn

MY UM-BRELLA'S IN THE LOCKER.

screech

AH!

BUMP

Come back alive..

N-Nishim-kun.

Praying.

Will he be okay?

Hey

SHHHH

ZSS

S

SHH

OBVI-OUSLY.

I DIDN'T COME HERE TO PLAY.

THIS AIN'T MUCH FUN...

WHAT...

...NO.

I DON'T LIKE CLASSROOMS EITHER.

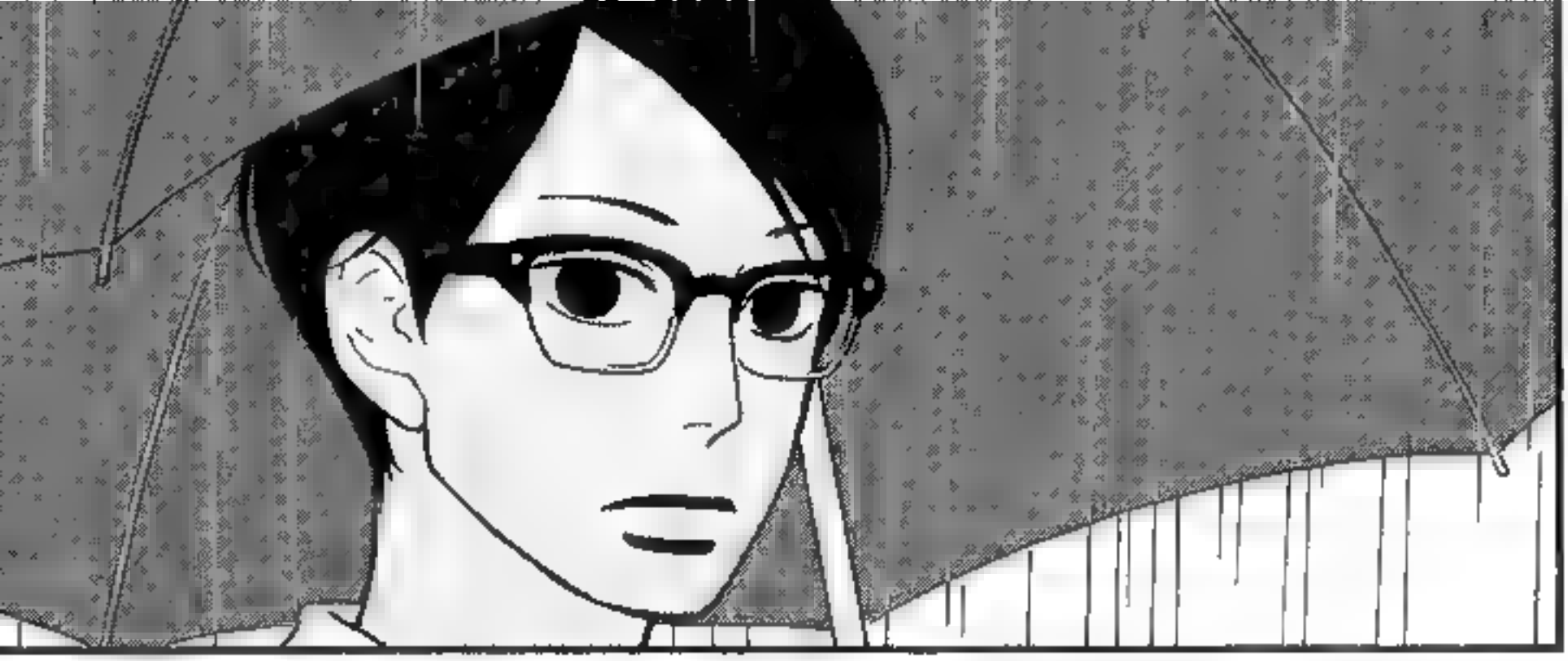
IF YOU'RE BORED THEN FEEL FREE TO LEAVE.

I'M TAKING REFUGE FROM OUR CLASS.

..

THEN WHUDDUYA COME HERE FOR?

AS IF I'D TELL HIM THAT



Help
STOP

Splash
Splash

DON'T LUMP US TOGETHER...
Splash

...HMPH.
Splash

WHAT?
QUIT FOLLOWING ME.

sloshh
sloshh
DAMN...
sloshh
WHAT A PEST.
sloshh
sloshh
sloshh
sloshh
..
smirk
!!
Splash
Splash
Splash
Splash
Splash
DASH

splash
YOU PSYCHO!!
splash
splash
D DON'T CHASE AFTER ME!!
splash
hee hee hee
splash
TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP
splash
splash
splash
HA HA HA HA HA
Don't come here!!
H-HEY!
Huff
CUT IT OUT...

BON,

WHY DON'T YOU COME AND JOIN ME?

YOU'LL FEEL REFRESHED.

WHOMP

LEAVE ME ALONE...

COME ON.

D...

DON'T COME NEAR ME!

IT WAS ABOUT TIME FOR A SHOWER ANYWAY.

HAHA.

FEELS GOOD!

HEY, BON!

GRAB

!!

SHIK

WHAT'RE YOU SO AFRAID OF?

DOESN'T DO YOU ANY GOOD TO BE A SCAREDY-CAT.

TUG

NOW GET YOURSELF WET!

BOOM

FLUSH

...

sob...

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BOTH OF YOU...?

Wow

WH...

SHEESH!
EVEN WHEN YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL, YOU'RE STILL A PEST!
GRAB
SENTAROU, WHAT DID YOU DO THIS TIME?
WE'RE GOING TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE
AND BORROWING SOME TOWELS.
ARE YOU COLD?
Sniff
Damn it!
NO...
ACHOO!
MU-
MUKAI-SAN.
That's.

YOU GO ON AHEAD TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE!

YOUR GYM CLOTHES ARE IN THE LOCKERS RIGHT?

OH RIGHT, YOU'LL BOTH NEED TO CHANGE!

I'LL GO AND GET YOUR GYM CLOTHES.

MINE ARE IN MARLIO'S LOCKER.

Please don't go...

Y... YES...

THUD

creak

PLOP

YANK

SSHHHH

..

TAC

KTAC-TAC

KTAC-TAC

KTAC

KTAC-TAC

TAC

KTAC

HURRY AND COME BACK...

scrub

MUKAI-SAN.

...HUH?

OH.

YOU RECOGN ZE IT?

IS THAT...

JAZZ...?

OHH, CLASSICAL, HUH?

FWIP

I... PLAY PIANO,

BUT ONLY CLASSICAL...

SOME-WHAT...

HUFF HUFF

SORRY FOR THE WAIT!

...HUH?

BORING.

What?!

OH...

LOOKS LIKE SHE'S OUT.

...

THE NURSE IS...

NISHIMI-SAN,

..

WHAT'S WRONG?

HUH?

I COULDN'T TELL WHEN YOU WERE WEARING YOUR GLASSES,

BUT YOU HAVE A PRETTY FACE.

CALLING A BOY "PRETTY" IS RUDE...

HANDSOME, THEN. .

OH.

TH-

THAT'S... SO OUT OF THE BLUE...

OH... THE GYM CLOTHES. Here's your portion.

Really?

TH-THAT'S NOT TRUE

ah tch

WELL,

I JUST HAD FEELING YOU WERE ABOUT THE SAME SIZE.

Height comparison among acorns.*

...WH!

...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

Ow...

TH

UMP

*Translator's note A saying that means having no outstanding characteristics or to a seem about the same

SHEESH!

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO BUMP OUR HEADS!

Acorns...

SORRY ABOUT THAT.

UHH,

...

WAIT!

APOLOGIZE TO NISHIMI-KUN!

WHERE'S MY GYM CLOTHES?

It's your fault he's soaking wet!

STILL AFRAID.

YOU SCAREDY-CAT.

...HMPH.

WH!

STOP

JERK

UH-HUH.

I was resisting!

I-

I WASN'T SCARED!

I'D BE AFRAID ANYMORE.

AS IF

I SEE.

THE RAIN FALLING UPON MY BODY

FELT BETTER THAN I COULD HAVE EVER IMAGINED.

YEAH, I KNOW.

N-NISHIMI-KUN. WE DON'T HAVE GYM NEXT...

It's Literature.

WANNA JOIN US?

I... I'LL PASS..

DON'T WE LOOK COOL?

HOW ABOUT IT?

Smirk

STRANGE.

BUT I CAN BREATHE PERFECTLY FINE.

I'M BEING STARED AT LIKE THIS,

SOME KIND OF MAGIC?

WHAT IS THIS?

THE ATMOSPHERE'S SO DIFFERENT FROM EARLIER.

Maybe Sentarou's declaring himself a slave?

Beats me

What's with them...?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

OHH,

UM... I'M SORRY ABOUT YESTER-DAY.

MUKAI-SAN!

YOU'RE A BIG HELP.

I WOULD HAVE BEEN OUT ON A LIMB LEAVING SCHOOL JUST LIKE THAT...

OH!

YOU WENT TO THE HOME ECONOMICS ROOM

AND EVEN IRONED MY CLOTHES TO DRY...

NISHIMI-SAN,

YOU SMILED.

...

HUH?

SWOOP

SENTA-ROU!!

Ww-What?

♪

!!

SMACK

CAREFUL ON YOUR WAY HOME!

RITSUKO! BON!

SEE YA!

You're one to talk!

...

Attacking people from behind.

Careful?!

Splash

Splash

DO YOU,

ALL TO YOURSELF,

THE ONE WHO KEEPS THE WANING SUNLIGHT AFER THE RAIN

WHILE RUNNING SO CARELESSLY

DOWN THE HILL ROAD THAT

I DESPISE,

SEE SOMETHING BEYOND THAT HILL?

IS IT A SIGHT MY EYES HAVE NEVER SEEN?

Brought to you by

Stiletto Heels

SCENE3

"IT'S DADDY'S GIFT TO YOU."

"THIS IS YOUR PIANO, KAORU."

"YOU CAN PLAY THE PIANO EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE A SAILOR."

"WOW, DAD!"

"THAT'S PRETTY NEAT."

"KAORU,

"YOU BE A GOOD BOY, NOW."

"WAIT UNTIL I'M DONE PLAYING THIS SONG."

"MM."

"MASTER KAORU, YOUR MEAL IS READY."

PLAYING THE PIANO

OF NOT HAVING MY FATHER WITH ME,

OR THE BAD THINGS THAT HAPPEN AT SCHOOL.

HELPS ME TO FORGET THE LONE-LINESS

"HAS A LARGE, GRAND PIANO AT HIS HOUSE."

"YOUR UNCLE IN KYUSHU WHO'S TAKING YOU IN,

"DON'T YOU WORRY, KAORU."

DAD,

I WOULDN'T BE HAPPY WITH

IT HAS TO BE THE ONE

THE GRAND PIANO.

YOU BOUGHT FOR ME.

rub
rub

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I HAD THIS DREAM?

HOW STUBBORN.

chirp
chirp

...

HFF...

HAD BROKEN DURING THE MOVE.

TO LISTEN TO INSTEAD OF PLAYING THE PIANO,

MY FAVORITE RECORD, WHICH I BROUGHT WITH ME,

GO AND BUY A NEW ONE.

...GUESS I'LL HAVE TO

CRACK

Adhesive won't work.

KAORI-KUN, YOU'RE AWAKE MUCH EARLIER THAN USUAL.

OH, MY.

tap tap tap

I'M IN THE MOOD FOR CHOPIN.

UH... NOW?

IT WOULD BE A BAD IDEA TO MAKE THAT MUCH NOISE IN THE MORNING.

AWWW,

BUT I WANT TO HEAR IT! WAKE US UP WITH A SONG FROM CHOPIN.

DID YOU WANT TO PLAY THE PIANO?

YOU CAN IF YOU WANT.

...

I JUST CAN'T WIN...

KTUNK

LET ME HEAR YOU PLAY THE PIANO.

PRETTY PLEASE?

DON'T WORRY. I'LL TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY.

NO, EVERYONE WILL BE MAD AT ME.

PLAYING THIS SOFT TUNE SOFTLY,

AND I CAN SEE THE FIGURE OF AN ISOLATED SHIP LOITERING IN THE VAST SEA.

MY SENSES BECOME HEIGHTENED,

DAD...

S... SORRY, AUNT.

SEE?

BUT MARIKO-CHAN

ISN'T IT COMMON SENSE? THINK ABOUT THE NEIGH-BORS!

PLAYING THE PIANO AT THIS HOUR!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

JERK

I SUPPOSE

IT MUST BE DIFFICULT FOR A SINGLE FATHER TO DISCIPLINE HIS SON.

KAORU-SAN, YOU SHOULDN'T BLAME OTHERS.

OKAY.

HURRY AND PUT ON YOUR UNIFORM.

MARIKO, DON'T WANDER AROUND IN YOUR NIGHT-GOWN.

I WARNED YOU NOT TO DO IT.

?! WHAT!!

NO MATTER WHAT,

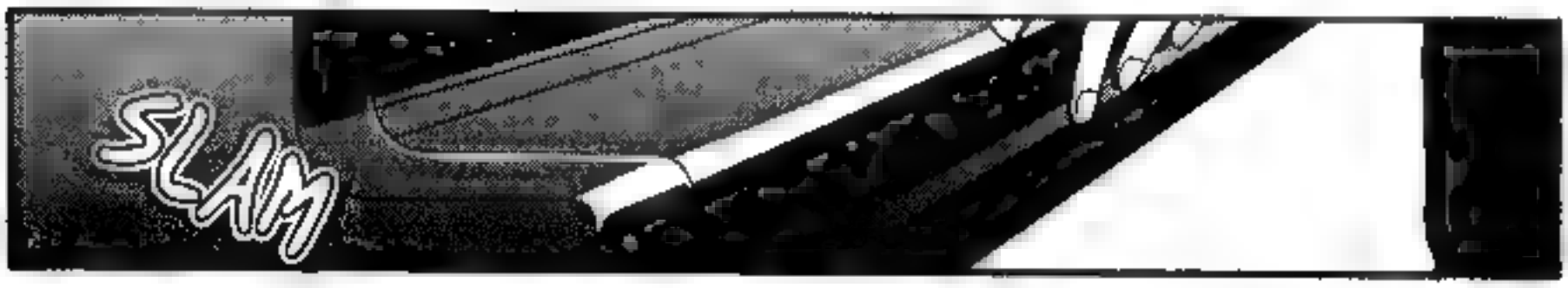
A PART OF THE BLAME GOES TO YOUR MOTHER FOR RUNNING OFF AND LEAVING YOU.

WELL,

SEEMS SO FAR-AWAY.

YOUR RETURN IN AUGUST

DAD,



TALKS TO ME, I FEEL AS IF I'VE BEEN RESCUED.

SENTAROU DIDN'T SHOW UP TODAY.

I bet he's ditching again...

DON'T TELL ME

YOU'RE LONELY WITHOUT HIM?

OH.

YEAH, I'M FINE.

WHEN MUKAE-SAN

I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR QUES-TION.

...I'M SORRY,

MUKAE-SAN.

(Y)

EXAM

YOUR

MEMO

SHOW

SHUDDER

poke poke

AND WHEN HE'S FINALLY AWAKE, HE'S EATING HIS LUNCH EARLY.

AND FALLS ASLEEP AND SNORES IN CLASS AND EVEN DURING BREAKS,

HE ALWAYS HIDES BEHIND ME,

AND THEN HE TRIES TO COPY MY ANSWERS DURING A TEST.

munch munch

I can smell the food

Teacher you should warn him.

Hmm

ZZZ

ZZ

Pipe down!

GRRRRRRRZD

Grinding his teeth

O-OH...

YOU LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE GETTING ALONG.

IF HE KEPT ON DITCHING SCHOOL FOREVER.

I'D BE HAPPY

As if I'd show you! (Still had it stolen in the end.)

Is it over yet?

I'VE HAD TO SUFFER A LOT OF DAMAGE.

THE OTHER KIDS IN OUR CLASS

...

How?

I

JUST KNEW THAT YOU COULD BE HIS FRIEND.

I KNEW IT.

WOULD GET SCARED AND RUN AWAY BECAUSE THEY HEARD RUMORS ABOUT HIM GETTING FIGHTS.

He's looking over here.

Should we look back?

BUT YOU CAN BE AROUND HIM WITHOUT HESITATION.

BUT HE'S REALLY A KID WITH A GOOD HEART.

SENTAROU MAY SEEM THE WAY HE IS,

W... WELL, IF YOU PUT IT THAT WAY...

clench

MUKAE-SAN...

DON'T... SMILE AT ME LIKE THAT...

OH... SO THAT'S WHY YOU SPEAK ON A FIRST-NAME BASIS.

OH, YEAH.

CHILDHOOD FRIENDS...

HUH?

AS HIS CHILDHOOD FRIEND, I CAN GUARANTEE IT.

YOU CAN USE OUR FIRST NAMES IF YOU'D LIKE.

Call me Ritsuko

AND I'LL CALL YOU...

KAORU-SAN.

KAORU-SAN.

THROOOB

Kaoru-san... (Echo)

Kaoru-san...

Kaoru-san...

WH...

WHY DOES IT... SOUND SO SWEET?

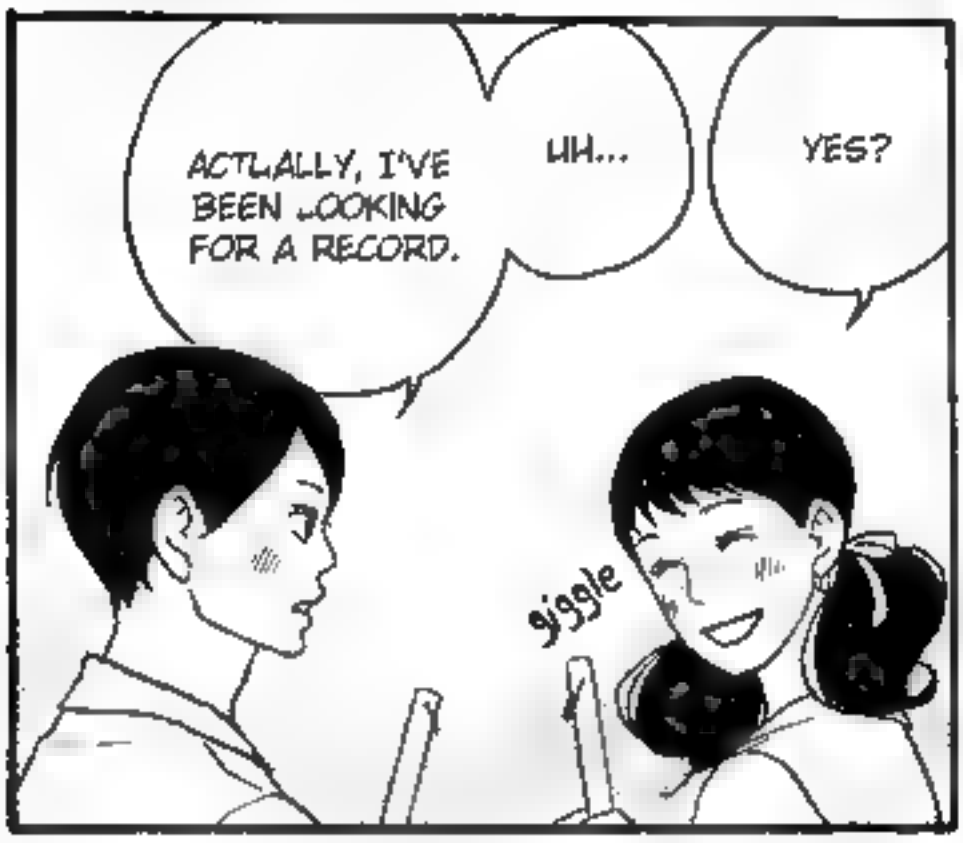
OH, SORRY, I SHOULD HAVE ASKED.

I WON'T IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT...

NO, I DON'T MIND. NOT AT ALL.

Um. Then I'll call you Ritsu-chan Awkward, huh?

CRACK


ACTUALLY, I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A RECORD.
UH...
YES?
giggle

OH, YEAH.
MUKAE-SAN. .
I MEAN, RITSU-CHAN

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR RECORDS, WE HAVE PLENTY AT MY PLACE.
RECORDS ?!
WANNA COME OVER?
HOW ABOUT TODAY?!

DO YOU KNOW
ANY RECORD STORES THAT STOCK CLASSI-CAL RECORDS IN TH S TOWN?

"DO YOU... KNOW WHY I INVITED YOU OVER TO MY PLACE?"

"WE CAN PUT THE RECORD ON LATER."

"WANNA COME TO MY PLACE?"

HUH?

PUP

"KAORU-SAN..."

slide

WOULD TODAY REALLY BE OKAY?

OF COURSE

Will her family be home?

WAIT, AREN'T THINGS MOVING A LITTLE TO FAST?

Are girls in Kyushu this forward...?

MUKAE RECORDS

RECORD SHOP MUKA JAZZ

THIS IS MY PLACE.

AND THIS IS MY FATHER.

THE CLASSICS ARE ON THAT SHELF OVER THERE.

...

YOUR DAUGHTER OFTEN HELPS ME...

MY NAME IS.. N-NISHIMI KAORU.

M—

90°

I'm sorry, Mister Mukae

I HAVE TO CALM DOWN...

nudge

...UH-OH, I WAS SO HAPPY, I BECAME DELUDED.

I ONLY REMOVE MY GLASSES WHEN I'M WITH YOU.

I'M TRAINING MY RETINA.

Lying.

WELL,

IT'S BECAUSE YOU CALLED ME HANDSOME.

HM?

WHY?

SAY, I NOTICED THAT YOU HAVE A HABIT OF TAKING OFF YOUR GLASSES.

YEAH...

I PLAY ON MY OWN TOO.

DO YOU LIKE THE PIANO?

WHAT RECORD ..?

PIANO?

YEAH.

Huh?

THOUGH...

I'M NOT VERY GOOD

Y-YEAH...

HUH?! YOU PLAY PIANO?!

Peek

Come, come.

...WHAT?

DON'T TELL ANYONE ELSE.

SCRAPE

How can we go in front of your father?

Secret?

RITSUKO.

THIS IS MY SECRET ROOM.

W-WHAT?

DAD, KAORU-SAN IS

MINE AND SENTAROU'S GOOD FRIEND.

NO OUTSIDERS ALLOWED.

Mister Mukae.

...

SEN'S?

HUH... WELL, THAT'S UNUSUAL.

DON'T MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE.

This frail-looking kid...

...

E-EXCUSE ME, BUT I'M NOT REALLY FRIENDS WITH...

MNGH.

And about being frail...

WE WON'T.

CREAK

KAORI-SAN.

TO THINK THAT THERE WOULD BE A ROOM LIKE THIS

IN AN ORDI-NARY RECORD SHOP'S BASE-MENT!...

GO ON IN.

IT'S A PIANO.

Tap
Tap
Tap
Tap
Tap
Tap

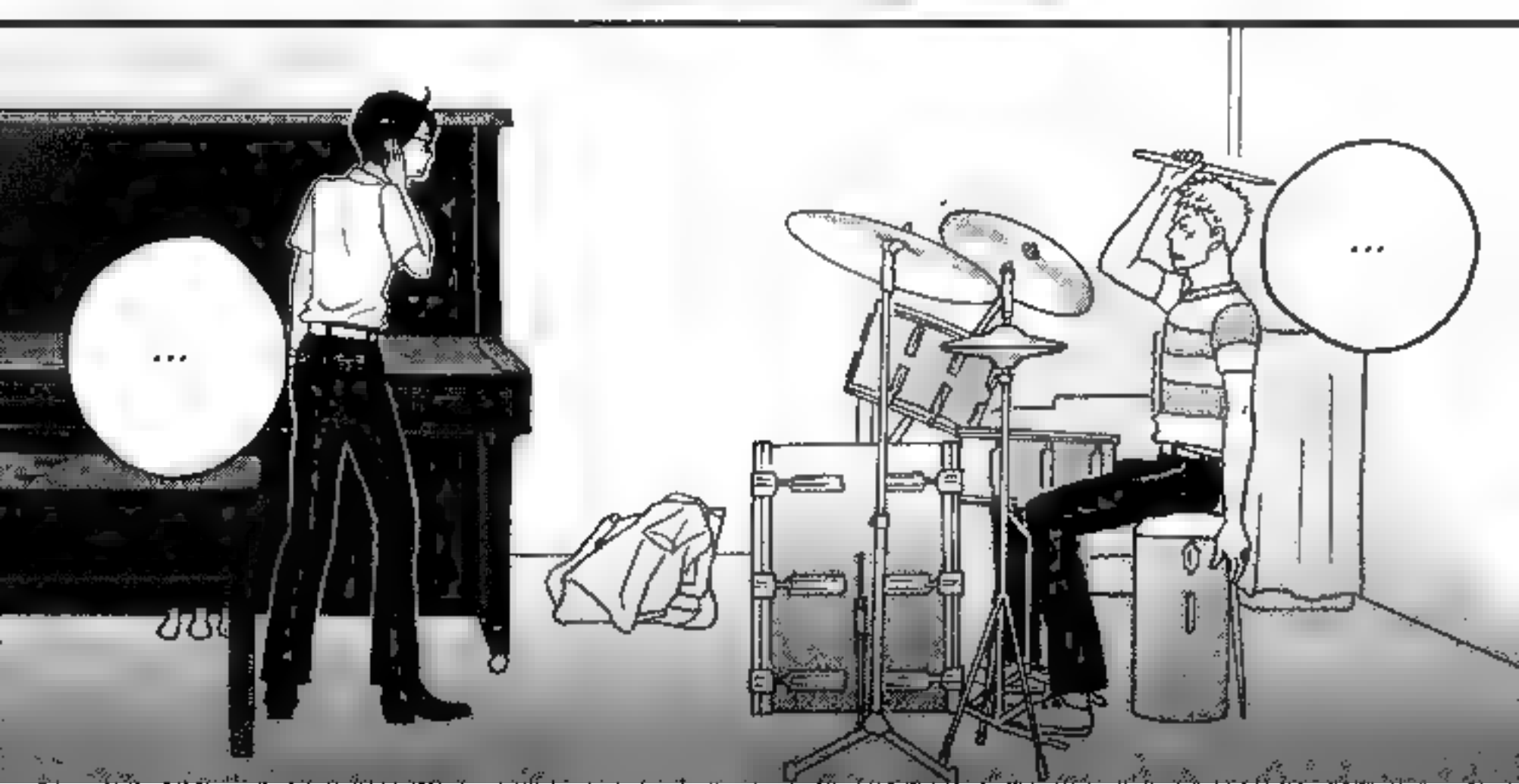
AH!

IT RESEMBLES MY OTHER PIANO...

KSSHIA

AAAN

KSSH
HH


...
...

BON!

WHAT ARE YOU DOIN' HERE?!

WH-

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?!

OH, YEAH, YEAH.

I BET HE DOES.

I'M TALKING ABOUT NISHIMI-SAN.

You don't remember his name, do you?

LISTEN, SENTAROU, KAORU-SAN PLAYS THE PIANO!

OH,

I WAS THE ONE WHO BROUGHT KAORU-SAN.

RIKKO! THERE'S AN OUT-SIDER HERE!

HUH? WHO'S KAORU-SAN?

So this guy... skipped school and came here...

TIC

TIC

WHAT'S SO FUN ABOUT THAT?

PRIM AND PROPER CLASSICAL, HUH?

RICH BOY'S

KISHH

PSHH

MY ONLY INTEREST IN MUSIC IS JAZZ.

DSS

SHH

DAKA

DPAN

DAKA

DAKA

ARE BUZZING.

DKKT

DKK

MY EARS

DPAN

OF SUBTLETY.

HOW CAN YOU CALL THIS MUSIC?

THERE'S NOT A SINGLE TRACE

DUH-

TAK-

TAK

THIS GUY...

HIS WHOLE BODY

IS SAYING

HOW MUCH HE'S ENJOYING THE SOUND.

MY EYES AND EARS

FOR A WHILE NOW,

I CAN'T BREAK FREE.

WERE SNATCHED BY HIM.

MY BODY

FEELS HOT.

Ha!

KAORU-SAN!

Aww

ANYTHING BUT JAZZ ISN'T ALLOWED HERE!!

Especially classical

JAB

HEY, RIKKO!

HUH?

KAORU-SAN, PLAY THE PIANO!

Don't just stand there and watch

UH...

I'LL PLAY FOR YOU INSTEAD.

IF YOU WANNA HEAR IT,

...OH,
I KNOW THIS SONG...
HE'S MOVING HIS FINGERS STRANGELY...
A FAMOUS JAZZ SONG
Slump
CRACK
CRACK
nudge
I CAN'T TAKE THIS.
HUH?
That's not it.
DAMN IT...
HM?
tumble
= drop
...THAT'S WRONG! ALL WRONG!
IT'S LIKE THIS.

THERE'S NO "SWING"

IT'S SO SMOOTH, YOU CAN'T EVEN HEAR THE JAZZ.

At least it's better than your piano playing!

THE TUNE SOUNDS RIGHT!

I SHOULD HAVE .. PLAYED IT CORRECTLY!

You're kidding.

...

My piano's got the soul of jazz.

I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOU TWO PLAY... A SESSION TOGETHER.

SAY...

Hum...?

NIFFED

WHAT?!

BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED IN THE JAZZ AN UNCIVILIZED BRUTE LIKE YOU WOULD BE INTO.

IT'D BE A PIECE OF CAKE WITH JUST A LITTLE PRACTICE,

UH...THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, RIKKO.

THIS KID DOESN'T KNOW A THING ABOUT JAZZ AND HAS NO SENSE, EITHER.

AS IF

Awww...

Tch!

Sorry for being uncivilized.

I'D DO A SESSION WITH HIM.

UM... PLEASE COME AGAIN!

KAORU-SAN!

Jerk

Not goin' to buy a record

SORRY FOR INTRUDING.

bow

THROB

RITSU-CHAN...

"A SESS ON TOGETHER!"

"I'D LIKE... TO HEAR YOU TWO PLAY..."

together...

together...

KTAC
KTAC
KTAC

TURN

RITSU-CHAN.

WHAT.. WAS THE NAME OF THE SONG THAT HE PLAYED ON THE PIANO JUST NOW?

SEN CAN ONLY PLAY THE INTRO TO THIS SONG.

Y-YEP.

...THE ONE SEN PLAYED?

HUH?

UM...

I'LL TAKE THIS.

ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ MESSENGERS'

"MOANING."

THAT KID... CAME HERE LOOKING FOR CLASSICAL,

BUT BOUGHT SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.

MM...

FOR A WHILE NOW,

JUST WATCH. I'LL MAKE HIS JAW DROP.

DOESN'T HE KNOW HOW MANY YEARS I'VE PLAYED PIANO?

HOW CAN HE PUT ME DOWN?

CONTINUE BUZZING IN MY EARS AND WON'T STOP.

HIS DRUMS

MATCHING WITH THE RHYTHM OF MY WALKING,

SHEESH, IT MAKES MY STOMACH CHURN.

MY BODY

JUMPS UP WHILE I'M WALKING.

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO ABOUT THAT?

YAMAOKA.

IS THAT NISHIMI FROM OUR CLASS?

YEAH.

GUESS WE'RE NEIGHBORS.

YOU BOYS GET TOGETHER AGAIN SOON.

WE'LL PLAY AN INTERESTING GAME NEXT TIME.

Brought to you by

Stiletto Heels

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(Unless we really have to.)

SCENE4
シーン

DASH

I HAVE THIS ONE, WHOLE HOUR, WHERE NO ONE IS HOME,

TO MY-SELF.

NOW'S MY CHANCE!

MY AUNT,

LEAVES TO BUY GROCER-IES FOR DINNER.

OF COURSE I INTEND

TO UNDER-STAND THE CHARACTER-ISTICS OF JAZZ.

Let's see...

RUSTLE

tap
tap
tap
tap

W-

WAS THIS HOW IT GOES?

?

pling

TO THE LAG-GING RHYTHM.

MY FINGERS CAN'T SEEM TO ADAPT

BUT...

crackle

DISSO-NANT CHORDS,

SYNCOPA-TION AND PECULIAR ACCENTS.

thud thud thud thud

I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID IT'D BE A CINCH...

DAMN...

AH! NOT AGAIN!

I DON'T CARE IF I'M BEING STUBBORN. I'M GOING TO MAKE HIM EAT HIS WORDS.

AS IF I'D LET THAT GET ME DOWN!

BANG

BANG

BRRRN

WHOOSH

"THIS KID DOESN'T KNOW A THING ABOUT JAZZ AND HAS NO SENSE FOR IT, EITHER."

IF YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY, MAKE IT A CLASSY SONG.

Weird racket...

I TOLD YOU TO STOP MAKING THAT WEIRD HUBBUB.

ALREADY CUT SHORT, HUH?

I'll let it slide eh, it's Chopin, though!

I'M GOING TO TELL MY MOM THE NEXT TIME YOU PLAY.

AWW, I WANTED TO PRACTICE SOME MORE.

I NEED MORE TIME.

yawn

tap

tap

tap

tap

tap

SAID SHE WAS GOING TO THE BEAUTY PARLOR TODAY.

MY AUNT

I-it's perfect.

I give up-

Kaoru-san, you're amazing

I've always had it in me

Yeah, well,

SO I CAN SHOW OFF IN FRONT OF BOTH HIM AND RITSU-CHAN.

I'D LIKE TO HURRY UP AND MASTER IT,

EVEN IF IT'S JUST FOR TODAY,

I CAN PRACTICE A LITTLE LONGER THAN USUAL.

HELLO THERE, NISHIMI-KUN.

...JUST KIDDING.

HEHE...

MY, AREN'T WE IN A GOOD MOOD?

WHERE ARE YOU GOING LOOK NG SO HAPPY?

rustle
rustle
rustle
HUH?
GR
AB
"JUST ANOTHER CITY KID SHOWING OFF."
DON'T MAKE ANY NOISE.

WHAT DID I DO TO YOU?!

L-LET ME GO!

THIS GUY SITS IN FRONT OF ME.

WHY'S HE DOING THIS...?!

YOU JUST HAPPEN TO GET ON MY NERVES LATELY.

...NOTHING

WE'RE JUST KILLING TIME.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO ENTERTAIN OURSELVES?

LET'S SEE..

!!

HAVE THE TIME FOR...

I DON'T

squeeze

KILLING ... TIME?!

STUDENTS FROM THE GIRL'S SCHOOL TAKE THIS SHORTCUT, TOO.

AH, GOOD IDEA.

HOW ABOUT PULLING DOWN HIS PANTS?

DON'T!!

DO—

KA-CHAK

WE'LL GIVE THEM A GOOD SHOW.

SUUUUR

TCH!

I SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT THE 8MM FROM MY HOUSE.

WOULD HAVE HAD ME A FUNNY SHOT.

WHOOSH
OOMP

TUMBLE

...OUCH...

I RUSHED DOWN THE STAIRS TOO FAST...

SORRY.

YOU STILL ALIVE?

Ugh..

shake

shake

...

TELL HIM WHEN HE WAKES UP,

THAT A MAN SHOULDN'T GANG UP ON A WIMP...

HEY, ARE YOU GUYS HIS FLUNKIES?

HEY!
YOU'RE... THE WIMP HERE, BON?
You just realized that now O!
WE--
WELL, SORRY!
That gave me a shock!
Whoa!
JOLT
D-DAMN IT.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT THAT HE WAS HERE TO SAVE ME.
YOU'RE NUTS.
HUH? BEAT UP KAWABUCHI?! US?!
Whoa! Your tooth!
IF WE WORK TOGETHER, WE CAN DO IT!
Wheeze
BEAT HIM UP.
ARE YOU OKAY?
Y-YAMAOKA-KUN.
Stagger
WHAT... ARE YOU STANDING THERE FOR?

By Mourishi.*

*T/N: Mourishi is a samurai whose real name was Oo-eshi

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT METHOD YOU USE,

AS LONG AS YOU KNOCK HIM ON THE GROUND.

Grind

I'LL THEN SMASH HIS FRONT TEETH.

OH? WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

ARE WE GONNA FORM A CIRCLE AND START PLAYIN' A GAME?

PAT

GOING TO DUKE IT OUT ONCE AGAIN.

OH, BOY...

ALL I CAN DO IS WATCH...

SO HE'S...

RRR

RI-

RITSU-CHAN?!

KAORU-SAN, ARE YOU OKAY?

SNAP

AND SINCE I'M TIED UP, I CAN'T RUN AWAY EITHER...

SHE SAW ME IN THE MOST AWKWARD SITUATION.

My fly is open, too...

OH, NO!

PA-THETIC.

RITSU-CHAN...

NOT ONLY THAT, BUT SHE EVEN CAME TO MY RESCUE.

A MAN SHOULDN'T BE LIKE THIS.

WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

SHH!

LET'S SLIP AWAY QUIETLY.

SSH

click

SENTAROU WILL TAKE CARE OF THE REST.

CAN YOU HOLD ONTO MY GLASSES FOR ME?

SORRY.

EH?

I CAN'T...

EXPOSE MYSELF TO ANYMORE SHAME IN FRONT OF HER.

RUSH

THIS'LL GO ON FOREVER..

YOU BOYS AIN'T USED TO BRAWLIN', HUH?

SWISH

SHIT!

SWISH

HNH!

RULES, MY FOOT!

THUD

WAH!

WHY, YOU DIRTY...

HEY! THAT'S AGAINST THE RULES!

Yahhh.

NOTHING MORE THAN A PUSHOVER.

SO, EVEN THE GREAT KAWABUCHI IS

YAHHHH

HUH?!

YAHHHHHHH

NOW... I'LL SMASH IN YOUR FRONT TEETH FIRST...

HMM?

What's that?

WHA

?!

AGH

AHHHH

WHAT...

M-My elbow

Eek!

?

?

What was that?

throb

SLAM

FAINT

...HA.

FUHAHAHAHA.

HAHAHA!

BUT IT'S STARTIN' TO GET EXCITING AROUND HERE!!!

ALL RIGHT! I DON'T REALLY GET IT.

Aw

KICK

AB

SHUDDER

WE-

WE'RE GONNA DIE...

Eek!

smirk

CRACK

CRACK

YOU HAVEN'T TASTED ONE OF MY PUNCHES YET, HAVE YOU?

WELL NOW.

SHOCK

HUH?

WE'RE IN THE SAME CLASS?

DON'T RECALL EVER SEEING YOU...

?

The most damaging blow yet.

We sit near each other...

I'LL MAKE SURE EVERYONE IGNORES YOU IN CLASS!!!

ALL OF YOU!

JUST YOU WAIT!

Forget it

ORO?

RUN!

Wait!

You can't ignore death.

tmp tmp tmp

Y-Yamaoka..

Hang in there!

HEY, WHAT GIVES?

THINGS WERE JUST HEATING UP.

tap tap tap

ARE YOU OKAY, KAORU-SAN?

Y-YEAH...

I THINK SO..

What.. happened?

AH...! YOU'RE BLEEDING FROM YOUR FOREHEAD.

WE NEED TO GET THAT TREATED.

NEVER MIND HIS FOREHEAD.

DID YOUR FINGERS

GET INJURED?

UH...

WHAT?!

MY FINGERS...

ARE OKAY.

SO THIS GUY...

HAS ACTUALLY BEEN...

PAYING ATTENTION TO ME.

OHHH, SEN

YOU'RE ALL BATTERED-UP AGAIN... I'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR YA.

GO TAKE A LOOK DOWNSTAIRS.

SHOP MUKA

..AH!

DON'T TELL ME... IT'S JUN-NII?!

HE GOT INTO A FIGHT.

Hehe.

That wimp-O!

WHY'S THE WIMPY KID BASHED UP, TOO?

Oh sorry to intrude!

Huh? Who? I-I'm going too?

IS HE BACK FROM TOKYO?!

HEY.

HEEEY!

JUN-NII!

HOW'VE YA BEEN?

Ah, Jun-Ni!

Really?

You've grown taller

GOING AROUND BEATING PEOPLE UP AGAIN?

Two grants...

YEAH, WELL, I WASN'T OUT-OF-LINE TODAY.

HAHA!

Ah...

BY THE WAY... WHO'S THIS YOUNG MAN?

YOU'RE COVERED WITH MUD, SEN-BOY.

HE'S A CHUM O' MINE.

GRAB

NAME'S BON

WH- WHO'S A CHUM?

AND NOBODY LET YOU DECIDE...

Yeah

HUH, WELL, YOU GUYS SURE MAKE AN ODD COUPLE.

UM... IS HE YOUR BROTHER?

That strings!

OH, NO.

...AHH...

WHATEVER...

HEHE.

He he he

...WHENEVER YOU SAY ONE SONG, YOU DON'T SHOW UP FOR TWO HOURS!

Every time!

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE JUNICHI'S COME HOME...

As you can see.

CAN YOU

TEND THE SHOP FOR JUST ONE SONG?

JUN-NII LIVES NEXT DOOR.

HE'S GOING TO A COLLEGE IN TOKYO...

RITSUKO.

I'LL TREAT YOU TO CREAM SODA FROM OUR SHOP NEXT TIME.

WE CAN'T WIND DOWN WITHOUT YOUR POPS.

RITSU-CHAN, IT'S A FAVOR FROM ME, TOO.

HUH? GET GOING?

WITH WHAT?

CLIP

LET'S GET GOIN'.

ALL RIGHT! NEGOTIATIONS COMPLETE!

I can't win against sweets

...WILL YOU THROW IN A CREAM PUFF?

OF COURSE.

Up we go!

WHOA!

Mmm.

CRACK

How about "Bags' Groove"?*

Nothing too intense since it's just the first song.

What'll it be?

*T/N "Bags Groove" is a jazz composition named for vibraphonist Milt Jackson's nickname "Bags".

GO ON!

BON.

JAB

EH?

WOW...

A LIVE SESSION...

Just go with the flow...?

JUST GO WITH THE FLOW.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW THIS SONG!

PLAY IT?! ARE YOU CRAZY?!

ME?

PLAY THE PIANO...? HUH?

If I just..

play some chords,

? it might work out?

BWAAANG

HNGH?

BOOOONG

SHUDDER...

BOOOONG

F?

!

Easy for you to say...

DON'T SPLIT HAIRS; JUST JUMP IN!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET IT RIGHT.

Hnn.

Munng

TIK-TIK

OI, BON! DON'T BE SO JITTERY!

...

It's up to you, wimp

Come on.

I'M JUST GOING TO GO ALL-OUT!

He's goin' nuts!

Haha.

HERE GOES NOTHING!

There ya go!

Hawaha. It turned into "Moaning" half-way through.

ERRATIC CHORDS,

FANCIFUL MELODIES.

THE LAUGHTER JUST WON'T STOP.

I'M FEELING THIS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

RAMMING YOURSELF WITH THE MUSIC IS FUN.

YOU HAVE SUMMER VACATION SOON, RIGHT?

WHY DON'T YOU COME AND PRACTICE HERE?

Not that I own this place, now.

PLAYED THE PIANO BEFORE?

IT WAS PRETTY MUCH GIBBERISH, BUT YOU COULD FEEL THE JAZZ.

Y-YEAH... I'VE PLAYED... Just a bit of classical.

I'm embarrassed now that things have cooled down.

Ahh...

WOW, SO YOU'VE ONLY BEEN LEARNING JAZZ FOR TWO WEEKS?

THAT'S AMAZING.

THAT'S RIGHT, IT'S SUMMER VACATION.

OH, YEAH.

How about it, pops?

SUMMER VACATION.

WITH WAY TOO MUCH TIME ON MY HANDS.

UP UNTIL NOW, I'VE SPENT IT ALONE IN MY ROOM.

BON.

THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

YOU'LL COME EVERY DAY EVEN IF WE DON'T ASK, RIGHT?

THAT MY BRAIN CAN'T KEEP UP.

SCENE5

AWW, SHIT!

IT'S BURNING HOT!

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!

LET'S CALL IT A DAY.

OH, IS PRACTICE OVER ALREADY?

YEAH.

I CAN'T DRUM ANYMORE.

It's just too hot

YOU SAID IT... EVEN THOUGH WE'RE IN THE BASEMENT, MIDSUMMER CAN BE PRETTY TOUGH.

TOSS

TO HELL WITH THIS!!!

We need a breeze.

I BROUGHT OVER SOME COLD BARLEY TEA.

BRAVO, RIKKO!

DASH

Damn it!

THANKS. I'LL HAVE SOME TEA BEFORE HEADING HOME.

I'VE GOT TO TAKE A NAP BEFORE MY PART-TIME JOB, TOO.

CHUG

WHAT KIND OF JOB?

Clink...

BARTENDING.

JUN-NII CAN BE QUITE A DRINKER. IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.

His barley tea looks like bourbon...

So cool...

AHEM...

KTUNK

IT'S JUST US TWO...

OH...

THROB

AHH,

YOU MEAN ALVIN JONES?

We might have it upstairs.

tap tap tap

OH, YEAH, TELL US ABOUT THAT RECORD YOU TALKED ABOUT EARLIER.

NOW'S MY CHANCE.

RITSU-CHAN.

IF YOU'D LIKE,

WE WON'T BE... PRACTICING TOMORROW...

WE COULD DO OUR SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS AT THE LIBRARY TOGETHER?

TOMORROW?

OKAY!

WITH YOU THERE, I FEEL I CAN GET MY WORK DONE.

OH, TOMORROW'S SUNDAY, RIGHT? CLOCK?

CAN WE GO AFTER 11 O' CLOCK?

YES!

She answered without any hesitation!

Clench!

OH, YES, OF COURSE!

I CAN'T GET OUT UNTIL THEN...

THAT'S RIGHT! WE CAN MEET UP THERE!

The timing's perfect!

BEHIND THE CHURCH.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE THE CHURCH IS, DO YOU, KAORU-SAN?

WAIT, I'LL DRAW YOU A MAP.

OKAY...

AHH.

THIS CAN'T BE REAL..

GRIN

?

THIS SUMMER BREAK FEELS LIKE A DREAM.

Mmmm

Mmmm

Mmmm

BOY, SHE'S ROMANTIC!

TO THINK THAT WE'D MEET BEHIND THE CHURCH!

WE COULD SWEAR OUR UNDYING LOVE TO EACH OTHER. ♡

FIDGET

FIDGET

I CAME...

A BIT EARLY ..

Chirp

Chirp

Chirp

SO ON SUNDAY MORNINGS...

Hallelujah!

Hallelujah!

OH.

HMM?

RITSU-CHAN... IS A CHRISTIAN?!

poke poke

THUMP

WOW...

FW UP

?!

Why um?

HE'S ONE TOO?

DON'T TELL ME...

Mmm

Mmm

Mmm

Mmm

Mmm

LET'S GO, BON!

IT'S OKAY...

LET'S GO..

clop

SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING!

YOU'RE HERE EARLY!

KAORU-SAN!

WHAAAT?!

Being kidnapped.

RITSU-

Huh?!

Wah!!

Grab

EH ?!

MAN.

GOOD THING WE MADE IT.

IF WE DIDN'T CATCH THIS BUS, WE'D HAVE TO WAIT ANOTHER 40 MINUTES.

VROOM

NOW, THEN!

WE'RE HERE!

...ANY-WAY,

WHY IS HE WITH US?

VROOM

SEEMS SO FAR AWAY...

...WE'RE GOING TO THE LIBRARY BY BUS?

AWAY

AWAY

IT'S HOT TODAY.

IT FEELS MUCH COOLER AT THE BEACH.

cat-sick →

Mmgh

UM...

WHERE'S... THE LIBRARY ...?

I don't see it anywhere...

LET'S GO FOR A RIDE!

I RENTED A BOAT!

MRRmm

clip clop clip clop

MEANT FOR THIS TO BE OUR DATE...

RITSU-CHAN... I...

? SHOCK

...

Hum?

SENTAROU SAID THAT, TOO.

creak

...DON'T GIVE ME THAT FACE.

DON'T I GET A LITTLE SOMETHIN' FOR DOIN' ALL THIS ROWIN'?

...

BON.

RITSU-CHAN, WHY DID YOU HAVE TO GO AND INVITE HIM?

0o

HOW... DID THINGS END UP LIKE THIS...?

...WHY IS IT US THREE?

0o

Y- YOU CAN'T!

...EH?!

SENTAROU, YOU CAN HAVE A BITE OF MINE...

LET ME HAVE A BITE OF YOUR ICE CREAM!

LOOK, I GET IT..

EAT IT!

No other choice.

Ahhh.

COME A LITTLE CLOSER.

I can't reach.

THAT WOULD BE AN INDIRECT KISS.

RITSU-CHAN, CAN'T YOU SEE?

U-UM... Well..

WHY?

?

NO MORE ICE CREAM FOR ME.

HEY... WHAT'RE YOU LOOKIN' AT?

dangle

DAMN IT...

HE'S JUST ORDER-ING ME AROUND.

BUT I DON'T USUALLY WEAR THEM AROUND MY NECK.

I DO CARRY ROSARY BEADS, THOUGH.

DO YOU NORMALLY WEAR A CROSS, TOO?

NO.

RITSU-CHAN...

DON'T GO SHOOTING YOUR MOUTH OFF.

CREAK

RIKKO.

SENTAROU IS SPECIAL...

BUT THE PRIEST SAID THAT,

JUST NOW...

IT'S GOING TO SHAKE, SO HANG ON TIGHT!

WE'RE GOIN' TO FOLLOW THAT ROCK WALL.

CLUNK

WHOOPS...

THUD

THUD

THUD

THUD

Woo-hoo!

TEAR

ALL RIGHT!!!

OKAY! I'M GOIN' FOR A SWIM!

OR WAS IT JUST MY IMAGINATION?

THE ATMOSPHERE STOOD STILL FOR A MOMENT.

HE-

HE JUMPED FROM SO HIGH UP...

KAORU-SAN.

SPLASH

YAHOO!

YOU'RE NOT SWIMMING?

CLENCH...

SENTAROU DOESN'T HAVE ONE, EITHER. HE'S JUST IN HIS SHORTS

I DIDN'T BRING A BATHING SUIT...

ER... WELL...

THROB THROB THROB

There's nobody around to see.

Must resist openly staring.

YOU MIGHT AS WELL SINCE WE'RE HERE.

LET'S GO FOR A SWIM, KAORU-SAN!

YOU'RE UNDRESSIN' NOW?

WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

Quit wastin' time.

drip

drip

shake

YOU'RE RIGHT!

...YEAH!

YOU'RE AS FLAT AS A WASH-BOARD!

HAHA! WHAT'S THERE TO BE SO SHY ABOUT?

!

RIKKO, HURRY UP AND JUMP IN!

cover

O-

OK.

BESIDES, YOU WERE SWIMMIN' IN YOUR UNDER-GARMENTS THE OTHER DAY.

Ha ha ha.

THAT WAS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!

SHEESH!

AHH!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

DON'T TELL ME...

RITSU-CHAN,

HEY...!

HUH?!

TO— SS

!!

HEAVE!

HO!

RIKKO, HOLD YOUR NOSE.

M-

MY NOSE?

THROW

OFF ya go

AHHH!

Grab

OH, BON, YOU GOIN' TOO?

Er-?

RITSU-CHAN?!

RI-

RITSU-CHAN!

SPLAAAASH

SPLAAASH

SHE-ESH!

wheeze wheeze

SLOSH

PUHH!

I almost drowned!

YOU'RE SUCH A BULLY, SEN-TAROU!

GLUG

GLUG

GLUG

GOOD-NESS!

shwp

THAT GUY..

DOES THE MEANEST THINGS.

I'LL SAY!

FEELS GREAT, DON'T IT?

HAR HAR HAR.

I don't know how to tread water

I...

CAN ONLY KEEP AFLOAT IF I SWIM LIKE THIS.

shuuuuup...

...?

Kaoru-san?

WHY ARE YOU GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES?

W-WE-L...

I CAN SWIM FASTER, TOO.

I MADE HER LAUGH.

shwp

shwp

HAHAHA!

AH.

YOU'RE SO FUNNY

...HEHE.

...

I JUST... COULDN'T GROW OUT OF IT.

IT'S AN OLD STYLE OF SWIMMING MY DAD TAUGHT ME.

shwp

WHY?

Ha ha ha ha ha

I FEEL SO HAPPY?

WHY IS THAT WHEN SHE LAUGHS,

SLOSH

AHH.

JUST TO SEE HER SMILE.

I'D DO ANYTHING...

SPLAA

ASH

HEY! WHY'RE YOU RUNNIN' AWAY?

Hawala, Kaori-san, wait!

SPLASH

SLOSH

SPLASH

Teach me how to swim like that, too

NO THANKS!

RITSU-CHAN, LET'S GET AWAY!

YOU GUYS ARE HAVIN' FUN. I WANT IN, TOO!

SPLASH

HEY, WHAT GIVES?

SPLASH

WHISK YOU AWAY FROM HERE.

IF ONLY I COULD...

CREAK

SLOSH

So tired.

LIMP

THUNK

CREAK

HEY.

CLINK

CHANGE PLACES.

CLINK

CREAK

WHATEVER, JUST HAND IT OVER!

With your strength..

THIS IS PRETTY TOUGH.

clutch

I'LL ROW US FROM NOW ON.

THIS IS ALL ABOUT TECHNIQUE, NOT STRENGTH!

I'M ALMOST GETTING THE HANG OF IT!

Huff

Huff

Uh-huh.

Don't be so stubborn...

WANNA CHANGE, BON?

NO!

Huff

PHEW ...

DAMN IT...

CREAK

...

THIS BOAT'S GETTING PULLED IN WITH THE TIDE...

skid

SUIT YOURSELF...

BESIDES, THE SUN IS SETTING...

Ok. ?

DON'T WORRY. IF WE LET THE BOAT RENTERS KNOW, THEY'LL COME AND GET IT.

Slump

...

WE ENDED UP ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT BEACH...

WHOA...

SPLAAASH

DON'T ACT SO COLD WITH US.

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN, LITTLE LADY.

HEY,

GRAB

HM?

STOP!

WE WON'T HURT YOU.

NO!

catch

LET ME GO!

I DON'T WANT TO!

WE'RE JUST GOING FOR A WALK.

Here.

WHO ARE YOU? MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!

WHAT'D YOU SAY?!

LET HER GO.

spin spin

CAN'T YOU SEE SHE AIN'T WILLIN'?

OI!

THAT GUY KNOCKED DOWN OUR HEAD HONCHO IN MIDDLE SCHOOL.

I HEARD

WHAT? DON'T BUG ME!

THAT'S KAWABU-CHI.

H-HEY, WAIT.

Huh?

ACTIN' ALL TOUGH. ARE YOU TRYING TO BE SOME KINDA HERO?

...

What does he mean by that?

THANK YOU.

I'LL LET HIM OFF EASY THIS TIME...

WELL, THEN...

HUH... HMM...

Oh, yeah?

Yeah...

Good idea...

-TCH!

YOU SAVED MY LIFE.

MY HAT KEEPS GETTING BLOWN OFF BY THE WIND.

AWW.

OH!

JUST LIKE THE ONE YOU'RE WEARING.

PERHAPS I SHOULD TIE A STRING ON MINE, TOO.

SOMETHING BEYOND MY IMAGINATION.

SOMETHING AWAKENED INSIDE OF HIM.

AT THAT MOMENT,